



Are You Okay? by TKDP

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Summary: Ever since the Demogorgon was destroyed, Nancy hasn't been able to sleep without seeing it or the people affected by it. No one understands except one person, but can that person make her feel...okay? Jonathan/Nancy

Are You Okay?

Okay...well...this is my first time writing for Stranger Things, people! I really hope I don't screw up! XD! But please give me a chance, trust me, I have a lot of writing experience. Plus, we need more Jancy fics! Geez, I love them all so much! XD! OTP!

Anyway, I noticed many Stranger Things authors have written about 'nightmares', so to speak, and I'm trying not to make this fic cliché. Not that I don't enjoy the other nightmare stories, because I REALLY do, I just don't want my story to be a copy. So, I'm writing the nightmare effect a bit differently. Pray that it'll go well! XD! BTW, if you're from the Stranger Things archive and want to learn about me, check out my profile or feel free to PM me! With all that said, let's move on to the fic!

Nancy Wheeler pressed a hand against her locker, leaning her head against it and trying to force her eyes to stay open. Her head spun with thoughts, making her dizzy. Or maybe that was the lack of sleep. She wasn't entirely sure anymore. It was getting harder and harder to focus on school these days, not when she'd learned so many things a classroom could never teach her, like how to make a club, how to fight off a monster, and how to (barely) survive in another dimension. The only person who seemed to know anything at all about the subject was Mr. Clarke, but he was at Mike's school and wouldn't you know it, no teacher with nerdy knowledge about other dimensions worked at the High School.

Nancy tried banging her head on the locker, trying *anything* to keep her eyes from closing, but all she succeeded in doing was forming a small bruise on her forehead. Oh well, add it to the dozens of others she'd gained from monster hunting.

"Nancy? Are you okay?" asked a familiar voice behind her. Nancy summoned up all her strength and turned to the boy.

"Hey Jonathan."

"Whoa, you look...kind of tired," said Jonathan. Nancy smiled, she could see the shock on Jonathan's face, but as always he caught

himself and tried to sound calm. Nancy knew she looked like a wreck, because she'd finally given up trying to hide the state she was in. The dark circles under her eyes were now too prominent to hide with blush or concealer, and even holding a brush felt like holding a fifty-pound weight.

"Yeah, I didn't get much sleep last night." Nancy forced a smile, willing her lie to seem real. Actually, she'd taken a three-hour shower when she should've been sleeping, since the cold water was the only thing that managed to keep her awake, even if she had to lean on the shower wall.

"You look like you haven't slept in days," said Jonathan. He seemed to be trying to *sound* humorous, to make her smile, but the worry in his eyes was far too prominent. After Barbara's death, Nancy had felt alone at school and Jonathan had, in some ways, assumed the role of 'new best friend'. He could never replace Barb, though, and he knew it.

"Yeah, um, I was busy studying for a test," murmured Nancy, running a hand through her tangled locks. She couldn't remember if she brushed her hair or not that morning. But then again, she was having a hard time remembering a lot of things since the nightmares. She was pretty sure she'd remembered to put on shoes...Jonathan would comment if she hadn't, right?

"What test?" asked Jonathan.

"Home Ec."

"You don't take Home Ec."

"I don't?" Gee, that backfired.

"Nancy," said Jonathan. "Are you sure you're okay? You don't have to lie to me." That was sort of true, Nancy supposed. Once you've battled a giant monster together, there was nothing much to hide. But they both had their deep secrets that no one needed to know about, and Nancy intended to keep things that way.

"Yes, I'm sure," said Nancy. "Now, I've got to get to class." Nancy

turned to walk down the hall, but was stopped by Jonathan's confused voice.

"Um...Nancy? Third period's that way." He pointed down an adjacent hallway, and Nancy wanted to smack herself for being an idiot.

Xxx

Later that night, Nancy sat at her desk scribbling down answers to homework. She was determined to keep her high GPA despite her drowsiness, but as she wrote her words look more like nonsensical squiggles, and her numbers became fuzzy. Nancy groaned and placed a hand on her forehead, willing herself to focus...focus...

Nancy heard a roar and whipped around, right as the lights flickered off.

There, in her room, stood the monster.

Nancy screamed and grabbed for the nearest item to her. It was nighttime, but her parents were having dinner with Joyce and Mike was there, too, playing Dungeons and Dragons with Will, Dustin, and Lucas. Nancy was all alone, but she was glad to know her family would be safe if she didn't make it out alive.

Then something strange happened. The lights flickered on, and the monster was gone. Then the lights flickered off again, and the monster reappeared. The pattern continued, until the monster blinked before Nancy's eyes like the lamp in her room.

Nancy backed towards the door, wondering if this was the end. According to Will, the flickering light meant the monster was going to take you. However, the monster made no move towards Nancy, even as she slowly opened the door. In fact, the monster didn't move at all, just disappeared and reappeared.

Eventually, Nancy got a sickening suspicion of what might be happening. She stepped into the hallway, keeping her eyes on the monster. She then grabbed a nearby vase of flowers and dumped it on herself, shaking her head ferociously. It wasn't the most convenient solution, but it was enough to end the illusion.

When she looked up, the monster was gone.

Now soaking wet and miserable, Nancy ran out of her house with tears clouding her vision. There was no escape anymore. Her nightmares were becoming so vivid, even when she was awake she was imagining things, like a mirage.

Nancy stumbled down the road, grabbing a nearby street sign for balance. Her ancient mascara that she'd never cleaned from her eyes now ran freely down her cheeks, and she viciously swiped at her cheeks with her sleeve. Her arm felt so heavy, she could barely lift it.

Nancy knew she'd need to sleep soon, but...no. She couldn't. She'd rather just die with her eyes wide in perpetual fear than close her eyes and see that horrible monster. Or see what she imagined Barb's face looked like as she was dragged away. Or see what that strange girl—Eleven—had described as the appearance of Barb's body.

Not really knowing where to go, but knowing she wanted to stay away from the night creeps in town, Nancy stumbled towards a bench in the park, well aware that by her awkward gait and swaying steps she'd look like a drunk to anyone that passed her. Nancy just missed the bench, falling to her knees, but dragged herself onto it. She stared across the moonlit park, feeling overwhelmed with shame and jealousy. No one else had to carry the burden she did. No one else was responsible for the death of another person, their best friend even. No one else had to look death in the face and bash it with a club. No one else had to hide their secrets from their parents, and the friends they didn't have.

"Nancy? Is that you?"

Nancy groaned and placed her head in her hands. Not again. Not that person. *Anyone* but that person. "Hi Jonathan."

"What are you *doing* here?!"

"I could ask you the same question."

Jonathan grinned awkwardly, and Nancy thought it was cute—sort of. "Just, uh, taking some pictures of the park. The way the lake glows in

the moonlight...makes for some pretty great pictures."

Nancy blinked and stared. Jonathan was right, she supposed. She'd just thought the glow was from her hazy vision.

For some reason, Jonathan thought the glow of the lake couldn't compare to the sparkle in Nancy's eyes.

"Do you want to go to my house?" Jonathan asked, tentatively. They were friends, so he was pretty sure he could ask that kind of stuff. "Your dad and mom are there, you know. I'm sure Mike wouldn't mind having you around, as long as you don't interrupt their game."

Nancy was surprised, Jonathan didn't often talk that much. Maybe he could tell her throat was too tired and sore for long conversations, especially after all her screaming, and was making up the difference for her. Anyway, Nancy shook her head. "N-no, I'd rather my parents didn't see me like this."

Jonathan hadn't noticed in the darkness, but now he could see the dry tear stains against her hollow cheeks. "Um, do you want me to bring you home?"

Nancy nodded, but whispered under her breath. "But I don't want to be alone."

"I can stay...I mean, if you want me to," he said, awkwardly. Despite his crush on her, he didn't want to push her too hard, or risk scaring her away.

"You said that before," Nancy murmured, weakly.

Jonathan didn't need an explanation to know what she was talking about. "No, I said 'I can go home' before."

"Not much of a difference."

"Those are opposites."

"Oh." Nancy once again felt the urge to smack herself, feeling embarrassed just listening to herself ramble. Luckily, Jonathan didn't comment on it, and just gestured awkwardly in the direction of her

house.

The two walked through the park in amiable silence, with Jonathan stopping occasionally to take a picture of something he found interesting. Nancy couldn't help but feel fascinated by Jonathan's ability to notice such small details, and then print them into images everyone could admire. It really took seeing the simple things, the things most people would gloss right over—but that was kind of Jonathan's specialty.

As they walked, Nancy found herself feeling calmer than she had in the past week—which is about how long it'd been since she'd had a proper rest. Nancy soon found herself tilting sideways slightly as she walked, as though there was something she could lean against to rest for just a moment. Jonathan noticed and his eyes widened; he grabbed her arm and gently pulled her into a standing position. She smiled woozily, and held her arms out to steady herself, as if the earth had suddenly shifted beneath her.

When they reached the edge of the park, they froze. To get to Nancy's house they'd need to descend a stairway, with ramps the local kids liked to skateboard down. Jonathan looked from the stairs to Nancy and back again, worry in his eyes. However, he said nothing, knowing Nancy was too proud to get assistance. Nancy just focused forward, though Jonathan could see her eyes were dilated and her pupils seemed to twitch.

"Um...Nancy?" Jonathan asked, quietly.

"Well, what're you waiting for?" asked Nancy, whose voice had recovered, gesturing to the stairs. "Let's go."

At first everything was fine...until Nancy tripped and fell down the stairs onto the concrete. It wasn't a far fall, for the stairs weren't so steep, but it still took Nancy a moment to sit up in shock. "Ow..." She clenched her eyes shut and placed a hand to her head, then immediately snapped her eyes open again, panting heavily.

Jonathan raced down the stairs and sat beside her. "Nancy! Are you okay?!" Nancy had never heard him speak so loud, or so panicked, not even when the monster attacked.

"Y-yeah, just a little shaken up."

"I-I wish I had something cold..." Jonathan thought for a second, then pulled a water bottle out of his backpack with shaking hands, and pressed it to her forehead. It wasn't so cold, but it made her feel a little better, at least.

"Thanks," Nancy whispered, staring at her hands. They were scratched up, but beside the bruise on her forehead she was otherwise unharmed. The wind had just been knocked out of her, not that there'd been much in the first place.

"Um, Nancy? Can I ask you something?"

"Sure, Jonathan. You can ask me anything." Nancy knew she could trust Jonathan with that promise.

"When you sat up, you closed your eyes, then looked scared and opened them. Are you...okay?"

He'd asked this question so many times, but now he finally seemed to understand what the real problem was. *Perceptive*, Nancy thought. "It's just..." She paused, wondering if she could trust Jonathan with what she was about to tell him. She recovered immediately, however, knowing that she could trust Jonathan with anything, even her life. *That* had been proven. "Every time I close my eyes, I see the monster." Nancy's throat burned from speaking, and Jonathan offered her some of the water from the bottle he'd pressed to her forehead. She declined, however, knowing that if she didn't explain everything now she never would. "It's in my dreams, no, my *nightmares*. And now it's in my daymares."

"Daydreams," Jonathan corrected.

"Right," said Nancy. *Geez, I really need to get some sleep.* "Jonathan, I haven't been able to sleep in over a week. Every time, *every time*, I try, I see everything. I see Barb. I see the monster. I see the fire, and that weird girlfriend of Mike's, and Will on the gurney, and Steve after you beat him up, and...and...and you. I see you, too." She shook her head, trying to calm her breathing. She felt her heart kick-start as she spoke, and now could hardly hear her own words over the

thrumming of her own heartbeat in her ears. "I mostly see Barb and the monster, though. Those dreams are the ones that make sleep intolerable. I just can't...I can't anymore..."

Nancy started to cough violently, and chugged all of Jonathan's water bottle. She gave Jonathan an apologetic look, but he didn't look annoyed in the least. "How is it you don't get these dreams?"

"I got Will back," responded Jonathan.

And that's when the full weight of everything, what caused the nightmares, why she couldn't sleep, what the images meant, hit her like a ton of bricks. "And I didn't get Barb back." A single tear slipped from Nancy's eye, falling to the ground in a perfect spherical form. A small part of Jonathan wanted to photograph it, how unmarred and perfect Nancy's teardrop appeared, until it hit the concrete and shattered. "I was a horrible friend, and because of me, she's dead. And I'm going to have to live with myself for the rest of my life."

Jonathan shook his head quickly. "Nancy! What happened to Barbara wasn't your fault. If you'd have walked home with her, the monster would've just taken you both."

"It should've been me."

"You weren't the one who was bleeding."

Nancy just blinked at Jonathan, and Jonathan realized Nancy didn't care about the technicalities of her statement. She just wanted to be put out of her misery. "Nancy...you're going to be okay, right?" Panic rose in his voice, wondering what Nancy planned to do, should the nightmares continue.

Nancy chuckled, but the sound was bitter. "I don't know. Probably force myself to endure the nightmares. I'm just worried it'll give me a heart attack one day."

"*Nancy*. The nightmares won't last."

Nancy just shrugged, then rested her chin on the palm of her hand. "Can we go to my house now? It's getting chilly."

"Oh, right," Jonathan said, hastily. "Um, you can have my coat if you want."

"That's okay, my house isn't too far from here."

Jonathan nodded. "As long as you're okay." Finally, Nancy didn't feel so annoyed hearing him say that.

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Nancy changed into her nightclothes in the bathroom, then entered her own bedroom and climbed into bed. Jonathan was laying in the sleeping bag on the floor again. She still felt a sense of unease and apprehension knowing what was to come, but just the feeling of the plush mattress beneath her and the warm, quilted blankets cocooning her made her eyelids droop.

Nancy could feel the darkness enveloping her like a stormy sky...like the Upside-Down forest...like the black gaping hole of the monster's mouth...

Nancy sat up, breathing heavily, after only ten seconds of laying down. "Nancy!" gasped Jonathan, grabbing for his backpack as though to get something to help her. Knowing Jonathan, there was probably a whole arsenal in there. Nancy felt a strange, warm glow at the thought of Jonathan's first thought being to protect her.

Once Jonathan realized Nancy wasn't in impending doom, he placed his hand to his heart and breathed. "You surprised me. Nightmares?"

"Almost," said Nancy. "It felt more like...I don't know...the beginning of what I was about to see. Like, I wasn't exactly asleep."

Jonathan nodded, pretending to know what that meant.

"Just closing my eyes makes me remember the Upside-Down."

"I-I'm sorry about that..." Jonathan scratched the back of his neck awkwardly, unsure what he should say to make her feel better.

"Could you just come up here?"

Jonathan would never forget those words, neither the first time she'd said them nor now. But without the looming threat of a monster attack, Jonathan felt a bit uncomfortable. "I shouldn't...you have a boyfriend."

Nancy sighed, but it sounded more like a grunt. "Not anymore."

"What?"

"I broke it off with Steve a few days ago. He was confused at why I didn't focus and constantly dozed off, and when I tried to explain he said to just 'deal with it and move on'. It put me over the edge then, but I don't regret me decision. I'm not sure I could date anyone who hasn't seen the things I've seen anymore."

Jonathan nodded, and it dawned on Nancy that, while Steve hadn't understood and probably deserved a more doting and attentive girlfriend anyway, Jonathan *did* understand.

"Okay...then I guess I can come up," Jonathan murmured, standing up and walking over to Nancy. He sat down on the bed beside her and laid down, and Nancy had a sense of déjà vu.

Nancy let a small smile grace her lips, and resisted the urge to laugh when she saw how out of place Jonathan looked. Jonathan was completely stiff, as though he was trying to figure out what he should do. Was it bad if Nancy wanted him to put his arms around her? No, Jonathan was nothing like Steve. He would probably never make the first move.

Either way, Nancy decided she liked it like this. Whatever she felt for Jonathan could wait until tomorrow. Right now, she finally felt the tension slip out of her body, and felt a peaceful calm wrap around her.

As Nancy was beginning to doze off, she heard Jonathan's voice beside her.

"Nancy, are you *sure* you're okay?"

"Yes."

Aww, cute little Jancy one-shot. You know, I don't see many stories where Jonathan and Nancy stay friends after the events of season 1, and I wanted to write a story where they still stuck together before the romantic tension. I think it makes the feelings more realistic. God, I ship them SO much. Anyway, I hope you all enjoyed, leave a review if you think I should write more Stranger Things!